

Public Workshop:

UPDATE OF THE WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN CALIFORNIA

Date and Location:

Monday, November 30, 2009, 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM; Cal/EPA Building, Coastal Hearing Room; 1001 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814

Notice and agenda available at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/docs/wqmp_forests/notice110309.pdf

Notes: Pertaining to questions on pages 4 and 5 of the workshop notice.

QUESTION: Among the several types of land and resource management activities and recreational activities that take place on NFS lands in California and that can generate NPS pollution:

- ***Which ones are best handled by a statewide approach and should be addressed in a statewide WQMP and which ones should not?***
 - How will the waivers be addressed?
 - Suction dredge
 - Invasive species (e.g. zebra mussels)
 - Effects on coordination and oversight
 - How would enforcement be handled
 - Consider regional differences on BMPs
 - Include provision on how to address regional variability (e.g., differences between northern and southern California should be considered)
 - Define the differences between concerns versus interest issues
 - Coordination on OHV should be done with current State Parks effort
 - Concerns relating to how issues will be addressed given limited USFS resources for road system management
 - Baseline conditions BMPs/Need to prioritize
 - Lacks public information
 - Road network/interspersed
 - Support coordination time of closure
 - Looking for statewide enforcement; action to stop measures/monitoring prior to them going into effect (BMPs)
 - Regional diversity may require regional BMPs
 - 1000s miles of road closures during wet season
 - Toxins leaking from abandoned mines

- ***Which ones most need immediate attention, and which can be deferred for a few years?***
 - Invasive species such as mussels should be addressed sooner
 - Sedimentation from fires may not require immediate attention
 - Movement of deciduous forests can be addressed in the long-term
 - The use of off-highway vehicles should be addressed sooner
 - Climate change and sedimentation concerns
 - Fires
 - OHV
 - Utilizing water agency regulations-(i.e.) who's managing what?; what is the existing framework, plans, orders, permits?
 - Species habitat issues should not be deferred
 - Design standards, trails/roads/culverts, for flashy systems-increased effect under climate change
 - BMPs are not measurable, clear
 - Need to look at standards for various contaminants (e.g.) *E. coli*, total fecal coliform, mercury, arsenic
 - Timber practices –legacy
 - Introduction of other nutrients, human health issues
 - Management for the benefits of flooding for recharge –important under climate change

(See workshop attendees' priorities for WQMP topics at:
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/docs/wqmp_forests/publics_wqmp_priorities.pdf)

QUESTION: In addition to sediment and thermal pollution, what other pollutants generated by NPS on NFS lands are common or likely enough that they should be addressed in a statewide WQMP?

- Acid mine drainage, e.g. mercury, arsenic
- Fire retardants
- Other pesticides
- Consistent BMPs needed for application of fire retardants and pesticides
- Waste oil/other fluids released from OHV and all forest 'access' vehicles
- Erosion, old landings, old mining sites, major headcuts

QUESTION: In addition to certain forest road segments, what other types of "legacy" problem sites (i.e., those that were produced by past activities, but are still discharging pollution into the State's waters) on NFS lands should be addressed by the WQMP?

- Old mining sites, major headcuts, erosion, old landings/fill areas
- Clear cuts, high road densities, cumulative effects
- Abandoned brownfield sites, old mills can be highly contaminated

- Cumulative impacts on adjacent lands
- Need better Regional Board oversight
- Non-OHV, recreation, human waste, etc
- Old septic systems/agency management
- Streams that have been channelized in the past

QUESTION: What criteria should be used to prioritize remediation of legacy problem sites on a statewide basis?

- Focus highest level contamination and largest area(s)/acreage
- Potential to affect wildlife and human health, proximity to sites
- Presence of sensitive/listed species
- Existing watershed(s) with issues
- Meadow restoration, post-fire roads

QUESTION: In addition to implementing more rigorous pollution prevention practices and/or remediation of legacy problem sites, what should be done to help restore the quality and beneficial uses of water?

- Site-specific management practice(s) instead of statewide
- More systematic sampling
- More focused (i.e. on specific species) sampling
- Consultation with tribal groups in specific areas, proximal to restoration
- Use of local community knowledge
- Actual versus potential sources of pollution focus resources on actual pollution sources
- Restoration of riparian habitat, especially small streams

QUESTION: For watersheds on NFS lands that do or could contribute pollutants to a water body segment that has been listed as impaired pursuant to CWA Section 303(d): what criteria should be used to used to prioritize 303(d)-related restoration activities on a statewide basis?

- What comes out of these priorities?
- Priorities statewide versus regional?
- Standards versus thresholds? consistency is needed

QUESTION: Of the USFS administrative procedures for ensuring that appropriate pollution control practices 1) identified in NEPA documents, 2) specified in project plans and contract documents, and 3) implemented during project activity:

- **Which are most effective?**
 - Timber waivers, Regional Boards : effectiveness, forensic, implementation monitoring statewide

- **Which need improvement (and how)?**
 - Improve coordination between contract preparation and NEPA documents
 - Post-project follow-up on recommendations to close roads
 - Changes should be mapped
 - No budget to implement recommended monitoring
 - Need for riparian monitoring program funding
 - Follow through on actual natural monitoring

QUESTION: USFS currently conducts statewide randomized programmatic monitoring of whether pollution control practices have been implemented as specified and have been effective in preventing or minimizing the generation of NPS discharges. What other types of monitoring should be performed (e.g., paired watershed validation monitoring, project-specific instream monitoring)?

- Existing takes place first, basic implementation annually, recreation?
- How are the baseline monitoring results being used?
- Is the BMP monitoring random? Specific to watersheds?
- Is restoration coordinated with existing 303d and TMDL development?

QUESTION: What changes would improve the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the process (i.e., collaborative interagency staff group with policy-level group oversight and stakeholder committee advise) proposed for updating the WQMP?

- Inventory of what has or has not changed in plan
- Inventory of what is already covered by other management plans
- Important to get general public input and participation beyond just lip service; process should be transparent and not insular
- Allow for general public comment during drafting of key sections (e.g. BMP and monitoring) – drafts can be posted on the web and have a public comment period
- Requesting comment of the draft initial study may be too late in process

QUESTION: Regarding the proposed 12-member stakeholder committee

- **What entities/interests should be represented?**
 - See stakeholder committee nominee list for revised categories
- **How should it function?**
 - First meeting is set for January 12, 2010
 - Future meetings to be determined by stakeholder group
 - Group should balance discharger and environmental issues; and consider the beneficial uses of water